

8. RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE PLAN

INTRODUCTION

There are several primary community goals which come into play in this section of the 1999 Plan of Conservation and Development. They are all classified under "Quality of Life". They are:

- Preserve and protect the Town's natural resources: hills, rivers, streams, ponds, floodplains, wetlands and aquifers.
- Preserve prime agricultural lands and farming as both an industry and an open space amenity.
- Protect and enhance valuable open space areas.
- Provide an adequate amount, variety and distribution of recreational facilities and programs.

While these goals remain consistent with the goals established in 1987, the community survey and neighborhood meetings raised certain recreation and open space issues where it was believed improvement was desirable. The community survey response voiced overwhelming desire for the Town to set aside more open space for recreation throughout Town and particularly along the Connecticut River and the Scantic River. Recreation facilities were considered insufficient in the areas of walking trails and bikeways, riverfront recreation and playgrounds and picnic areas. There was also some interest expressed in additional swimming facilities.

At neighborhood meetings the participants expressed their appreciation for the Connecticut and Scantic Rivers and the many farms which contribute to local community character. There was a consensus that access and facilities along the rivers needed to be improved, that there should be a better system of walkways and bike trails and that some improvement should be made to increase indoor recreation opportunities for pre-teen and young adults, especially on the east side of Town.

The section below presents an inventory of active recreation facilities by size, type and location. The existing improved facilities are evaluated in comparison to recognized national standards. Non-developed open space including passive recreation and conservation areas are also tabulated and mapped, with particular attention to natural resource areas. The Recreation and Open Space Plan is then developed with objectives and recommendations intended to achieve the improvements desired by the community.

INVENTORY OF EXISTING RECREATION FACILITIES

The Town of Enfield recreation inventory includes 29 publicly owned facilities and 5 privately owned facilities available for public use. The facilities inclusive of school uses cover some 758 acres. Table 21 presents a list of parks and schools which contain recreation facilities. These sites are also shown on the Active Recreation Areas Map.

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Recreation facilities are categorized in Table 20 by the function and/or population they serve as defined in Table 21.

Table 20
Enfield Parks and Recreation Facilities

Location	Type	Facilities
Brainard Park Brainard Road 32.68 acres	CP	2 lighted softball fields, 4 picnic areas, playground, basketball, 2 parking lots
Lafayette Park Hartford Avenue 3.61 acres	PG	Basketball court, playground
Whit Acres Laurie Drive 4.4 acres	NP	Basketball court, softball field, playground
Memorial Park Alcorn School-Enfield Street 5 acres	PG	Playground, basketball court
Higgins School Neighborhood Center & Town Hall 7.6 acres	CP	1 lighted softball field, town green, 3 parking lots, gazebo, play unit
Asnuntuck Community College Elm Street 37.9 acres	PF	1 baseball field, 1 little league field baseball field, 1 softball field, 1 football field, 1 full size soccer field, 1 lighted basketball court, 2 lighted tennis courts, 2 lighted handball courts, ¼ mile track.
Powder Hollow Bowl Dusthouse Road 19.2 acres	PF	1 baseball field with dugouts, 1 little league baseball field with dugouts, concession stand building, picnic area, gravel parking lot.
Hazardville Playground Route 190 1.3 acres	NP	Basketball court, volleyball court, playground, 20' x 16' pavilion.
Green Manor Pool Taylor Road 7 acres	SA	2 handball courts, 2 lighted tennis courts, lighted playground, swimming pool, wading pool, bath-house, parking lot.
Mark Twain Recreation Area South Road 17.5 acres	PF	2 tennis courts, 2 little league baseball fields, 2 full size soccer fields, 2 parking lots.

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Location	Type	Facilities
Boat Launches South River Road/Parsons Road	SA	Boat launching areas (into Connecticut River), 2 parking lots.
Shaker Recreation Area Shaker Road 36.4 acres	PF	3 soccer fields, concession building with rest rooms
Lamagna Neighborhood Activity Center North Main Street	SA	Swimming pool 40' x 75' (outdoor), playground, multi-purpose building.
Wallop School Park Neelans Road 24.95 acres	CP	Playground, paved parking lot, golf driving range, archery range, 1 basketball court.
Eli Whitney School and Library Middle Road 15 acres	PF	2 softball fields
E.H. Parkman School Weymouth Road 15 acres	PF	1 lighted basketball court, 2 lighted handball courts, 2 lighted tennis courts, 2 softball fields, playground.
Hazardville Center Court Hazard Avenue 1 acre	NP	1 tennis court, small monument.
Harriet Beecher Stowe School Post Office Road 28 acres	NP	Playground, 2 "t-ball" baseball fields, basketball court.
Enrico Fermi High School North Maple Street 41.6 acres	PF	6 lighted tennis courts, 2 lighted handball courts, 2 baseball fields, 2 softball fields, football field, football practice field, ¼ mile track, soccer field (overlay), field hockey (overlay).
Hazardville Memorial School North Maple Street 6 acres	NP	2 40 yard x 60 yards soccer fields, 1 little league baseball field, basketball court, playground
Nathan Hale Elementary School Taylor Road 7.8 acres	NP	1 60 yard x 80 yard soccer field, 1 softball field, 1 basketball court, playground.
Enfield High School Enfield Street 51 acres	PF	4 lighted tennis courts, 4 lighted paddle ball courts, 1 lighted paddle tennis court, playground, 2 baseball fields, 2 softball fields, football field ¼ mile track, 2 field hockey/ soccer overlay (on baseball fields)

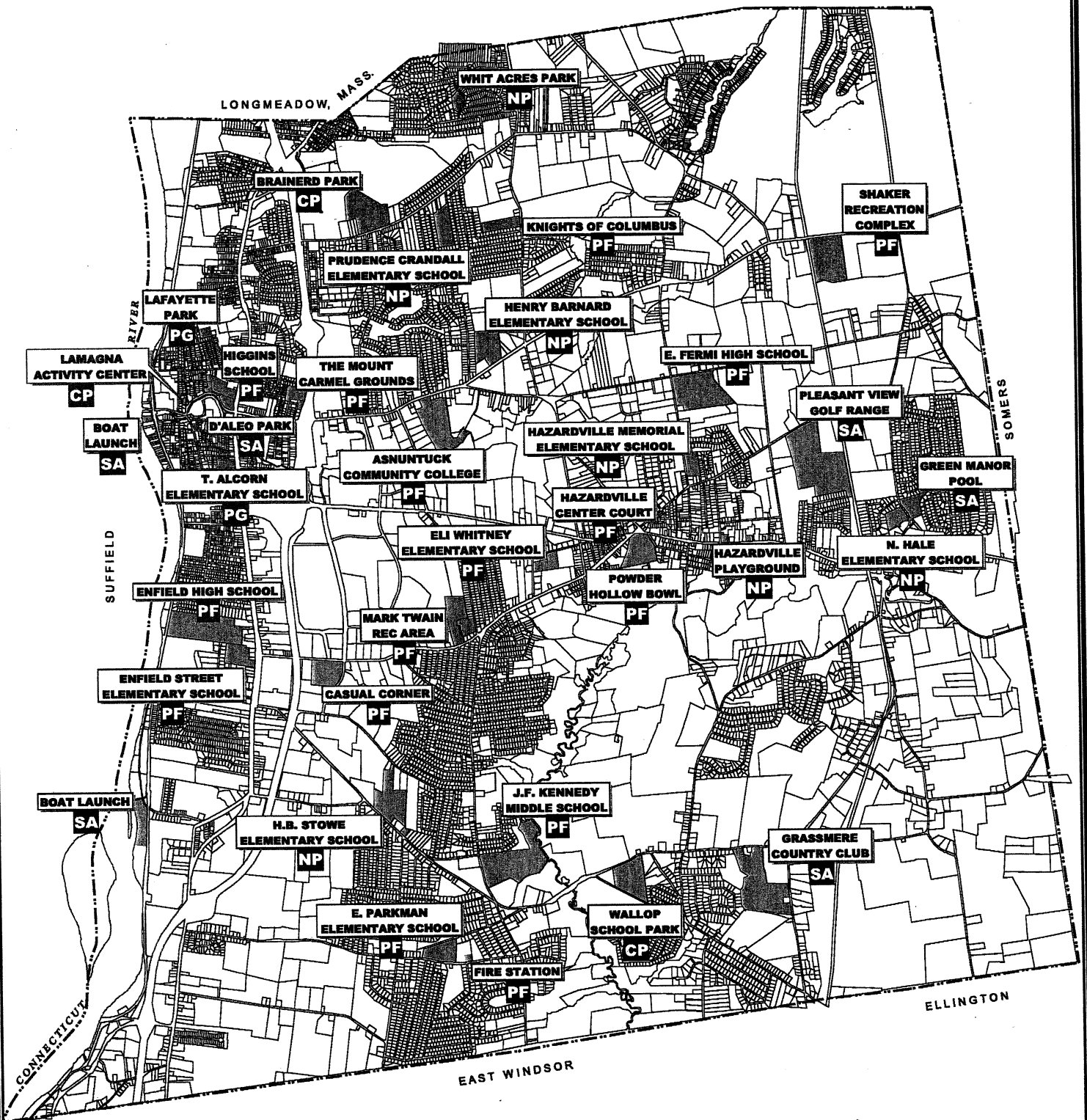
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Location	Type	Facilities
Enfield Street School Enfield Street 13.2 acres	PF	1 football field, 2 softball fields, 2 tennis courts, basketball court, playground
J.F.K. Jr. High School Raffia Road 54 acres	PF	2 lighted tennis courts, 2 lighted handball courts, 2 basketball courts, baseball field, 2 softball fields, football field, soccer field, field hockey overlay (on baseball fields).
D'Aleo Park Freshwater Pond	SA	Pond, ice skating (winter), walking trail
Fire Station Weymouth Road	PF	1 little league baseball field
Prudence Crandall School Brainard Road 15.9 acres	NP	2 basketball courts, 1 softball field
Henry Barnard School Shaker Road 19.6 acres	NP	2 little league fields, 2 small soccer fields, play area

Table 21
RECREATION FACILITY TYPES

Code	Name Description	
MP	Mini Park	Small, specialized facilities that serve a concentrated or limited population or a specific group, such as a tot lot for young children.
PG	Playground	Areas to fulfill the play needs of children between six and fourteen years of age, often located at or near elementary school sites.
PF	Playfield	Areas to fulfill the recreational needs of older children and adults, often located at or near junior or senior high schools.
NP	Neighborhood Park	Areas for active and/or passive recreation, generally large enough to provide for a variety of activities, located within neighborhoods for easy access.
CP	Community Park	Similar to neighborhood parks but larger in scale, often with unique natural features or special features that serve the entire municipal population.
SA	Special Area	Areas devoted to special uses (golf courses, beaches, and other unique facilities) or natural areas preserved as open space.

Source: Urban Planning & Design Criteria (1982)



LEGEND

- Active Recreation
- MP** Mini Park
- PG** Playground
- PF** Playfield
- NP** Neighborhood Park
- CP** Community Park/Facility
- SA** Special Area

SOURCE OF BASE MAP:
TOWN OF ENFIELD TAX MAPS AS DIGITIZED BY
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Active Recreation Areas

Planning and Zoning Commission
Town of Enfield, Connecticut
Plan of Conservation
and Development



HARRALL - MICHALOWSKI
ASSOCIATES, Incorporated
Hartford, Connecticut January 1998

In addition to the publicly owned facilities listed in Table 20, there are three privately owned sites which contain recreation facilities available to the public. These sites are Mount Carmel (1 baseball/football field), Knights of Columbus (1 baseball/softball field) and Casual Corner (1 softball field). There are also two private golf facilities (Pleasant View Golf Range and Grassmere Country Club). The Active Recreation Area Map shows the location of these public and private sites. There are a total of 34 individual sites.

COMPARISON TO STANDARDS

Historic and conventional standards for minimum park and recreation areas ranged from 10-15 acres per 1,000 population, depending on the reference source. For Enfield such standards would indicate a desirable park and recreation acreage ranging from 450-675 acres. These areas would include tot lots, playgrounds, playfields, neighborhood parks, plus town-wide parks, recreation complexes and special purpose areas such as beaches and golf courses. The inventory of Town-owned recreation areas totals about 430 acres including school uses. This suggests the active recreation inventory is below the established standard when one considers that a substantial portion of the school sites are used for educational purposes. More recent publications of the National Recreation and Park Association indicate that the acres/population type standard should be given less weight than the desires and resources of the community, and the difference in priorities applied to open space by different communities should be considered.

The State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan references the 1983 facility standards published by the National Recreation and Park Association. The state planners emphasize that these are guidelines. As noted with respect to acreage standards, the NRPA has most recently promulgated a demand driven recreation planning approach rather than a statistical ratio approach. Still, the guidelines provide a useful reference. Table 22 lists the guidelines for key facilities and how Enfield's inventory compares with the guidelines.

Table 22
Recreation Facility Comparison

Facility	Units/Population	Enfield Need	Available
Basketball	1/5,000	9	15
Ice Rink	1/100,000	1	2
Tennis	1/2,000	23	23
Volleyball	1/5,000	9	1
Baseball	1/5,000	9	17*
Field Hockey	1/20,000	2-3	4**
Football	1/20,000	2-3	6
Soccer	1/10,000	5	10***
Golf Course	1/50,000	1	0****
Track	1/20,000	2-3	3
Softball	1/5,000	9	19
Swimming Pools	1/20,000	2-3	2

- * Includes baseball and little league fields
- ** Overlaid on soccer fields
- *** Includes 5 non-regulation fields
- **** Grassmere Country Club is open to town residents.

As can be seen from a review of Table 22, Enfield's current inventory of recreation facilities compares quite favorably to the guidelines in all categories with the exception of volleyball. In addition, there is no public golf course available within the Town. The Grassmere Country Club is a private golf course but open to Town residents. Community Survey results indicated general satisfaction with active recreation facilities. Only swimming evolved more than 50% response for additional facilities. Golf was at 46%, baseball/softball at 43%, basketball at 42%, skating at 39% and tennis at 37%.

OPEN SPACE

In addition to the active recreation areas discussed above, Enfield has an inventory of open space which is either non-developed or passive recreation in use. Table 23 presents the amount of acreage in each category of open space. These parcels are shown on the Recreation and Open Space Plan.

Table 23
Open Space Inventory

<u>Category</u>	<u>Acreage</u>
Active Recreation	758*
Conservation Restricted	114
State Development Rights	772
State DEP Owned	370
Cemeteries	128
Water Company Owned	494
Other Open Space	995
 Total	 3,631

* includes privately owned sites

The 2,873 acres of open space inventoried in Table 23 (not including active recreation) represents 64 acres per 1,000 population or 15 persons per acre. When the area dedicated to active recreation is added to this open space inventory, the total acreage is 3,631 acres. This represents 81 acres per 1,000 population or 12 persons per acre. The Connecticut Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) states that the state average is 6 persons per acre of open space. This means that Enfield would need 7,200 acres of open space to equal the state average based on its current population of 45,000 persons less its institutionalized population. If the total inventory of recreation and open space acreage is used as a basis of comparison, the current inventory would be 3,569 acres short based on this standard. In fact, community survey responses were strongest for acquisition of additional open space and informal type recreation areas: walking trails and bikeways 83.2%, riverfront recreation 75.7%, play and picnic areas 70.6%.

In addition to the issue of the need for more open space, there is the issue of where such open space might be located and the nature of such open space. To the greatest extent possible, such open space should protect significant natural features and be linked in open space belts or systems. The extensive river and stream system in Enfield provides a logical framework for organizing such an open space system in a manner to create activity centers and neighborhood linkages by walking routes and bike trails.

RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE PLAN

Based upon a review of existing recreation facilities and open space as well as public input from neighborhood meetings and surveys, the following objectives and recommendations are proposed as the 1999 Recreation and Open Space Plan:

Goal: Preserve and Protect the Town's Natural Resources: Hills, Rivers, Streams, Ponds, Floodplains, Wetlands and Aquifers.

Objectives:

Protect water quality of aquifers through enforcement of land use regulation overlay covering these water supply resources.

Protect quality wetland areas from filling and encroachment through application of wetlands and land use regulations.

Protect residents from flood hazard by regulation of stream channel encroachment and construction in the floodplain.

Preserve natural resources, particularly rivers and streams through increased acquisition of vacant lands abutting such resources.

Recommendations: (included in above objectives).

Goal: Preserve Prime Agricultural Lands and Farming as an Industry and Open Space Amenity.

Objectives:

Cooperate with State and with private land trusts to acquire fee title, development rights or conservation easements over large farmland tracts.

Recommendations:

1. Encourage the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection to target its farmland purchase of development rights program to the Town Farm area of Enfield and increase the level of program activity in the Town.

Encourage the continued use of PA 490 to encourage large landowners to keep their properties in open use.

2. The Town of Enfield should acquire the development rights to agricultural lands at the intersection of Park Street and Hazard Avenue, which is just across from the proposed entrance to the State's "Powder Hollow" improvements.

3. Maintain the current residential zone districts in Town Farms Area.

Goal: Preserve, Enhance and Protect Valuable Open Space Areas

Objectives:

Improve the quality of life in Enfield by creating an open space network consisting of corridors and destination sites. Structure the network to maximize accessibility to all Enfield neighborhoods and residents. The destination sites will largely consist of existing parks, school properties and open space. The corridors will be formed by greenways, bikeways and sidewalks.

The Town, using available intergovernmental programs, should preserve as much open space land as possible to protect the stream belt, wetlands, floodplains and forest habitat along the Connecticut and Scantic Rivers. It should open these corridors to the public by developing greenways with walking and bike trails.

Recommendations:

1. Encourage the State to rapidly continue to assemble lands along the Scantic River. Only about 20% of the parcel acreage adjacent to the river is in permanent open space. Also encourage the State Department of Environmental Protection to begin implementation of the Enfield Component of the Scantic River State Park Master Plan.
2. Target the Alden Avenue lot to provide public access to Lafayette open space.
3. Target the Connecticut River parcels currently owned by Northeast Utilities for open space.
4. Catalog and pursue the use of possible recreation and open space funding sources such as:
 - Creation of an endowment fund for acquiring open space and recreational land as recommended in this plan. Publicize the existence of this endowment fund to encourage private donations and outline the benefit to the Town government of allocating funding to this endowment.
 - Re-establish an annual allocation of general revenue funds for open space acquisition or issue municipal bonds.
 - Prepare an action plan for utilizing the fund created by fee in lieu of open space regulations as a funding source for acquisition of strategically located parcels.

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- Monitor the availability of State and federal funds (ISTEA) and aggressively pursue them as funding sources for local projects, where applicable.
 - Consider establishing a recreation fund to buy easements along the Connecticut and Scantic Rivers and other environmentally sensitive parcels. A voluntary donation for open space enhancement could be added to the local water and sewer, electric and cable bills.
 - Explore use of fiscal techniques such as lease-purchase arrangements, installment sales and exchanges to acquire open space parcels.
5. Use Town zoning and subdivision regulations to encourage dedication of open space and access rights to add to the proposed greenway network. Requiring use of conservation subdivision design techniques will result in significant natural and cultural features being preserved. Such regulations require identification of wetlands, floodprone and steep lands and noteworthy features (mature woodlands, scenic viewsheds, wildlife habitats, etc.) in order to identify areas to be set aside as permanent open space.
6. The PA 490 State statute allows local assessors to reduce the assessed value of acreage in agricultural, forest or open space use to low values at the request of property owners. This has the effect of minimizing annual property tax payments which provides an incentive to keep the land open and undeveloped. Currently Enfield does not have a written policy for using the "open space" provisions of PA 490.

The following areas are recommended for preservation as open space under the PA 490 program:

- a. All privately owned areas designated as "wetlands" pursuant to Section 22a-36 through 22a-45 and 22a-28 through 22a-30 of the Connecticut General Statutes.
- b. All other privately owned parcels of land, owned separately from any adjoining land and having an area of not less than ten acres.
- c. All other privately owned areas used for one of the following purposes:
 - i. Watershed area for any water company.
 - ii. Any area noted as open space on an approved subdivision or resubdivision.
 - iii. Areas of 5 acres or more within 1,000 ft of a public well or proposed public well area.

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- d. Green belt areas which will link existing clusters of open space.
- e. Open lands on the Connecticut River, Scantic River, Jawbuck Brook, Waterworks Brook, Grape Brook, Freshwater Brook, Terry Brook, Buckhorn Brook, Beemans Brook and other watercourses in order to create green belts along these watershed areas.

There shall be excluded from the above areas:

- a. All land in commercial or industrial district.
 - b. All building lots in an approved subdivision.
 - c. All land upon which any building or structure is located, at least to the extend of the minimum lot size for the district.
7. Improve coordination of all stakeholders in the open space and recreation arena. There needs to be a greater communication between the different grass roots, non-profit, and official government agencies operating within the Town so that their efforts can be focused in areas which would enhance the open space system. The energy of local volunteers represents a considerable resource to the Town. Consider annual park and open space planning sessions before the municipal budget process begins. Establish a coordinating council which meets quarterly to review program progress and future plans to foster communication among stakeholders and responsible parties including outreach to residents of the Town.

Goal: Provide an Adequate Amount, Variety and Distribution of Recreational Facilities and Programs.

Objectives:

Maintain and enhance existing active recreational facilities, indoor and outdoor to provide residents with high quality and convenient recreation amenities.

Recommendations:

- 1. Install sidewalks along Dusthouse Road, South Maple Street and Cooper Street to link Hazardville's historic district, the Scantic River Park and Powder Hollow Bowl recreation area.

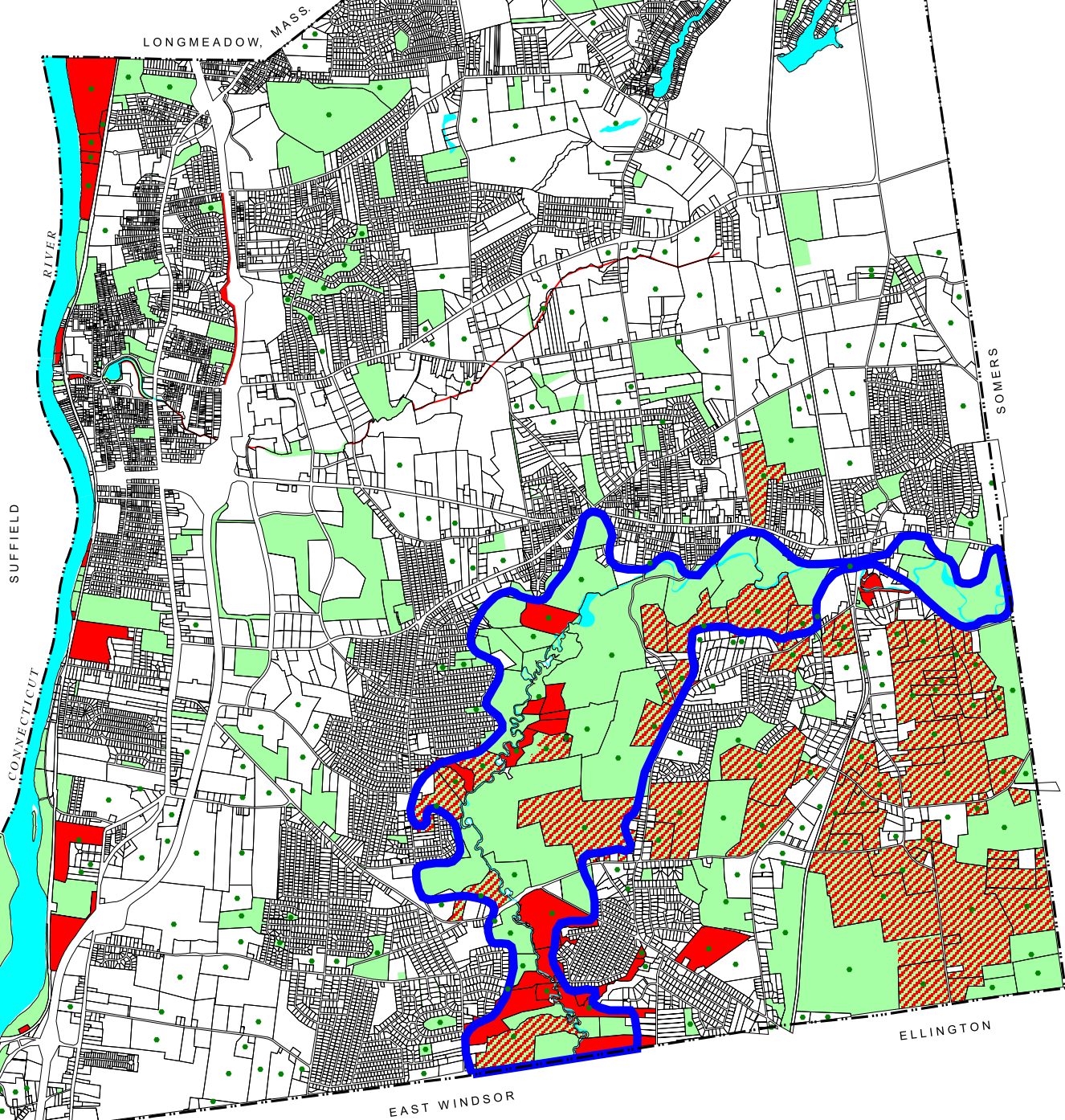
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2. Create circumferential bike/pedestrian trail connecting several activity centers and neighborhoods. Obtain State DOT participation to create a bike trail in excess I-91 right-of-way between Elm Street and Brainard Road.
3. Create and maintain more park-like settings throughout Enfield's neighborhoods by implementing park development programs on school properties. The Board of Education, Park and Recreation Department, and Planning Department should all be involved in this process. A concept plan for each school site should be developed with school administrators, students and neighborhood residents.
4. Develop a plan with Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection and Connecticut Department of Transportation cooperation for a biking and walking trail within the railroad right-of-way on the easterly side of Town. This could be linked to trails on Town roads and in the Scantic River Park.
5. Increase coordination and better allocation of maintenance resources and responsibilities between the Town and the Board of Education.
6. A system which streamlines the joint operational and maintenance responsibilities of the Board of Education and Town departments should be established. Develop a single point of contact for citizen calls in order to generate prompt and action-oriented responses regarding the maintenance and scheduling of facilities at school properties.
7. Develop a capital improvement plan and maintenance management plan for existing recreational facilities and grounds.
8. Connect existing park and open space areas together into an open space network. Create a system of trails, bikeways and sidewalk corridors which connect Town parks, open space, school sites and neighborhoods.
9. Consider development of an east side community center similar to LaMagna Activity Center.
10. Continue to fund and implement the following recreational capital improvement projects over the next five year period:

Town-wide ballfield upgrades
Gymnasium improvements
Town sports complex at Asnuntuck Community Center
Upgrade school playgrounds
Improve Enfield High athletic fields

Improve Fermi High athletic fields
Improve JFK Middle School athletic fields
Resurface tennis courts
Replace Green Manor pool
Complete Shaker Road Recreation Complex
Improve LaMagna Activity Center
Improve High Street Senior Center

11. Sidewalks are a component of the connective recreation network in the Town and can be considered a recreational as well as transportation resource. Elderly people, young parents, and others rely on sidewalks as informal recreation resources, and they add a sense of security and community to neighborhoods. Sidewalks should be considered a component of any future trail and bikeway system linking Town park and open space resources to neighborhood residents. A sidewalk extension program should be developed with this particular function as a development criteria.
12. Offer programs and services that are responsive to individual, group and neighborhood needs, make more efficient use of facilities and expand recreation opportunities for all citizens by:
 - a. Exploring the possibilities of establishing new policies and programs that could generate funds to defray the cost of recreational programming.
 - b. Implementing a program in which users or volunteer groups assist with park maintenance, security, litter control, and program support such as an “adopt-a-park” program.



LEGEND

- Potential Open Space Acquisition
- Farm Preservation
- Riverway Greenbelt
- Existing Recreation and Open Space
- 490 Parcel

Recreation and Open Space Plan

Planning and Zoning Commission
Town of Enfield, Connecticut

Plan of Conservation
and Development



SOURCE OF BASE MAP:
TOWN OF ENFIELD TAX MAPS AS DIGITIZED BY
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Hamden, Connecticut

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